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Review of the implementation of the recommendations and decisions adopted by the General Assembly at its tenth special session: Advisory Board on Disarmament Matters

Work of the Advisory Board on Disarmament Matters

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The Advisory Board on Disarmament Matters held its fortieth and forty-first sessions, respectively, in New York from 5 to 7 February 2003 and in Geneva from 16 to 18 July 2003.

The Board focused its deliberations on: (a) compliance, verification and enforcement of multilateral disarmament treaties; (b) disarmament and human security; (c) disarmament and development; (d) rising military expenditure; (e) review of the functioning and effectiveness of the Board; and (f) open-source data for promoting disarmament and non-proliferation.

The Board recommended that the United Nations identify the best way to preserve the expertise and knowledge of the United Nations Monitoring, Verification and Inspection Commission with regard to conducting monitoring and inspection activities, with a view to maintaining the Organization's readiness to address future non-compliance cases.

The Board also recommended that the United Nations convene a group of experts to examine and establish due procedures for the Security Council in dealing more effectively with future non-compliance cases.

The Board made several recommendations on the issue of disarmament and human security: (i) human security perspectives should be included when future disarmament programmes are designed; (ii) with a view to preventing conflicts or the

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recurrence of conflicts and sustaining peace, reconciliation and disarmament measures should be given prominence in peace-making and peace-building pacts and various measures should be designed to promote the reconciliation process; (iii) greater efforts should be made by the international community to prevent and eradicate the illicit circulation and trading of weapons, including small arms and light weapons, particularly in local communities; and (iv) disarmament education should be enhanced.

The Board further recommended a more comprehensive examination of the disarmament-development relationship to include the exploration of the relationship between disarmament and human security; disarmament and community economic development; and new approaches to the partnership between developing countries and the donor community.

The Board agreed on several measures aimed at improving its own functioning and effectiveness in advising the Secretary-General on disarmament matters.

In its capacity as Board of Trustees of the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research, the Board approved for submission to the General Assembly the report of the Director of the Institute on its activities from August 2002 to July 2003 and the programme of work and budget for 2004 (see A/58/259).

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I. Introduction

1. The Advisory Board on Disarmament Matters held its fortieth and forty-first sessions, respectively, in New York from 5 to 7 February 2003 and in Geneva from 16 to 18 July 2003. The present report is submitted pursuant to General Assembly resolution 38/183 O of 20 December 1983. The report of the Board on its work as Board of Trustees of the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR) has been submitted in a separate document (A/58/259).

2. Kostyantyn Gryshchenko of Ukraine chaired the two sessions of the Board in 2003.

3. The present report summarizes the Board's deliberations during the two sessions and the specific recommendations it conveyed to the Secretary-General.

II. Substantive discussions and recommendations

A. Compliance, verification and enforcement of multilateral disarmament treaties

4. At its forty-first session, the Board received discussion papers prepared by Maleeha Lodhi, Harald Müller and Rakesh Sood. It was also briefed by Jozef Goldblat of the Institut universitaire de hautes études internationales, Geneva, and Pugwash on the topic. During the discussion, the issue of withdrawal from disarmament and non-proliferation treaties was raised.

5. The Board underlined the importance of full compliance with treaty obligations by States parties in maintaining and strengthening the norm against weapons of mass destruction. It stressed that the compliance issue should be an integral part of the overall disarmament and non-proliferation process.

6. The Board noted the importance of the issue of withdrawal from treaties in the context of possible non-compliance and decided that the issue needed a further, in-depth examination.

7. The Board recognized that ensuring compliance with disarmament treaties required not only efficient verification but also removal of security threats or concerns, application of the principle of non-discrimination between States parties and political motivation of concerned parties to ensure the success of a treaty.

8. The Board noted that not all violations were equivalent. They might vary from technical breaches or offences resulting from misunderstandings, to material breaches or violations of provisions essential to the accomplishment of the object or purpose of the treaty. Therefore, in making an assessment of non-compliance, different situations and types of non-compliance should determine the appropriate remedy.

9. The Board recognized that action taken to redress non-compliance could vary subject to a specific situation. Measures ranged from reassurance and security guarantees to containment and enforcement. In that connection, political inclusion would be conducive to resolving compliance concerns.

10. The Board agreed that decision-making in the event of non-compliance must principally be a multilateral process on the basis of fairness and justice. It noted that the existing mechanisms built into disarmament treaties, such as consultation, clarification and cooperation, should be fully utilized in resolving non-compliance concerns.

11. The Board recommended that the United Nations identify the best way to preserve the expertise and knowledge of the United Nations Monitoring, Verification and Inspection Commission with regard to conducting monitoring and inspection activities, with a view to maintaining the Organization's readiness to address future non-compliance cases.

12. The Board also recommended that the United Nations convene a group of experts to examine and establish due procedures for the Security Council in dealing more effectively with future non-compliance cases.

B. Disarmament and human security

13. The Board discussed papers on the subject prepared by two of its members, Kuniko Inoguchi and Raimundo González. It also heard a presentation by David Atwood of the Quaker United Nations Office, Geneva.

14. The Board noted that new international circumstances had given rise to the expansion of the concept of security. Human security enriched the concept by reconceptualizing international relations from the standpoint of threats to individual well-being.

15. The Board recognized that the question of human security had many facets. It involved political, military, economic, environmental, cultural, disease, nutritional and community-related factors. It decided to focus its deliberations on the relationship between human security and disarmament. It noted that the social exclusion in which most of humanity lived meant that its victims remained severely deprived of economic institutions, schools and hospitals. It underlined the urgent need to reduce and eradicate such exclusion, which was detrimental to the security of citizens.

16. The Board noted that small arms and light weapons, as well as landmines, were the weapons of choice in recent armed conflicts, responsible for killing and maiming hundreds of thousands of people, mostly civilians, and millions more were displaced. It stressed that owing to their tremendous destructive capacity, weapons of mass destruction, particularly nuclear weapons, still represented the greatest threat to citizens of the entire world.

17. The Board agreed that preventive measures were pivotal and should be pursued with the objective of avoiding any human suffering and insecurity in the first place. The Board made the following recommendations:

(a) Human security perspectives should be included when future disarmament programmes are designed;

(b) With a view to preventing conflicts, or the recurrence of conflicts, and sustaining peace, reconciliation and disarmament measures should be given prominence in peace-making and peace-building pacts. Various measures should be designed to promote the reconciliation process;

(c) Greater efforts should be made by the international community to prevent and eradicate the illicit circulation and trading of weapons, including small arms and light weapons, particularly in local communities. In that connection, it was important to achieve universalization of existing conventions/norms on small arms and landmines, and to enhance their implementation;

(d) Disarmament education should be enhanced. Multicultural/ethnic education could be carved out at all levels of society, which could ultimately be the most effective way to enhance public awareness on the importance of mutual understanding and accommodation across different ethnic, religious and cultural groups.

C. Disarmament and development

18. The Board received discussion papers by Jill Sinclair and Pascal Boniface on the subject. The Board recognized that the issue was complex and broad in scope. It was pointed out that the traditional approach was based on the idea that progress on disarmament would lead to a reduction of military expenditures and translate into increased resources for development goals. However, that approach did not cover all facets of the relationship between disarmament and development. In reality, the reduction of military expenditures did not automatically lead to an increase in funds allocated for development. Disarmament itself, in the short term, could be expensive and in some instances required additional resources.

19. The Board noted that the relationship between disarmament and development involved another crucial element — security. In that connection, the Board examined the approach to the issue based on the concept of human security. Such security was gained through community-level disarmament, or microdisarmament, as a prerequisite for development. Conversely, effective community economic development was a key factor in preventing/mitigating violent conflicts, thus creating a security environment favourable to achieving disarmament goals.

20. The Board also examined the disarmament-development relationship in the context of regional conflicts and peace-building. The view was expressed that the United Nations, the Security Council in particular, should pay more attention to resolving long-standing regional disputes and conflicts that created a deep sense of insecurity among people. That insecurity had a negative impact both on disarmament and development in those regions. It was also suggested that the disarmament-development relationship should include the concept of reconciliation. It was noted that the complexity of the issue stemmed also from the uniqueness of each region or State's situation. A "people-centred" model of disarmament and development had to take into account specific characteristics of different regions and States.

21. The view was expressed that developing countries should play a key role in the new "people-centred" human security approach, while the traditional approach called for developed countries to assume major responsibility for reducing military expenditures and reallocating resources to development assistance.

22. The Board agreed that although the goal of reallocation of resources from military expenditures to development objectives on the global scale remained a

daunting task, the international community must continue to push for such action, with the developing world taking the lead.

23. The Board recommended a more comprehensive examination of the disarmament-development relationship to include the exploration of the relationship between disarmament and human security; disarmament and community economic development; and new approaches to partnership between developing countries and the donor community.

24. The Board heard briefings by representatives of the non-governmental organization (NGO) community on the issue of the costs of missile defence in the United States of America. The economist and Nobel laureate, Lawrence R. Klein, and the Vice-Chairman of Economists Allied for Arms Reduction (ECAAR), Richard F. Kaufman, addressed the Board on the outcome of the ECAAR study on the "Full Costs of Ballistic Missile Defense". The study found that the likely cumulative cost of a "layered" missile defence programme — including boost-phase, mid-course and terminal defences, as called for by the United States Administration — could be between US$ 800 billion and $1.2 trillion.

25. Professor Klein and Mr. Kaufman stressed that apart from the many uncertainties on the overall effectiveness of the proposed missile defence system, about which the scientific community was generally sceptical, the huge costs incurred by building such a system might result in an enormous budget deficit for the United States Government in the years to come. That would lead to tax hikes and cuts in public and social spending.

D. Rising military expenditures

26. The Board received a discussion paper by U. Joy Ogwu on the subject. It noted with concern that global military expenditures had been rising since 1998, after an observable general decline immediately after the end of the cold war, surging to $794 billion in 2002, according to the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute.

27. The Board observed that some of the main causes of the rise in military expenditures included an increase in using force to resolve disputes, States' security perceptions and an increase in the cost of the development of new weapon systems.

28. Noting that the military expenditures of just one country accounted for 43 per cent of world military expenditures, the Board agreed that the rise in military expenditures, in general, had a negative impact on overall global security and diverted precious resources from social and economic development needs, especially in developing countries, though effects might vary from country to country.

29. Observing that military means were in general not the most effective options in resolving conflicts, or in combating international terrorism, the Board agreed on the need to develop a new disarmament paradigm that promoted new perceptions of security, particularly human security. The principal elements of the new paradigm should include, but not be limited to:

- Renewed commitment by States to the long-standing United Nations programme on disarmament in order to free the world of the scourge of devastating war and conflicts

- Reduction and eradication of the reliance on the use of force in resolving all kinds of disputes
- Active pursuit of real disarmament measures through international legally binding instruments, with priority given to weapons of mass destruction
- Establishment or strengthening of confidence-building measures between States to reduce mistrust and misperception
- Development of education programmes on peace, disarmament and non-proliferation, targeting different audiences
- Good governance and democracy
- Social well-being and the safety of citizens
- Control and containment of access to and trade in small arms through an internationally binding agreement among nations
- Development of mutually beneficial bilateral and multilateral economic linkages between the North and the South, including restraint and control over the flow of weapons from the developed world to the poor countries of the South
- A public/civil society partnership not only in the quest for disarmament but also in the quest for human security.

E. Review of the functioning and effectiveness of the Advisory Board

30. The year 2003 marks the twenty-fifth anniversary of the establishment of the Advisory Board. It was thus appropriate for the Board to review its own functioning and effectiveness with a view to improving them. The Board received discussion papers on the subject prepared by two of its members, Jane Sharp and Vicente Berasategui.

31. The Board noted that its mandate had over the years evolved from focusing on study programmes undertaken under the auspices of the United Nations in the field of disarmament to mainly providing advisory service to the Secretary-General in the area of disarmament and arms control.

32. Recognizing that it had, in general, fulfilled its mandate in past years, the Board nevertheless believed it could be more responsive to developments in the field of international security and disarmament. With regard to its composition, the Board noted the need to achieve better the balance in terms of expertise and gender.

33. In order to be able to analyse issues more thoroughly and produce more specific and well thought out recommendations to the Secretary-General, the Board agreed that the number of agenda items for each session should be limited to two.

34. The Board also considered it necessary to intensify its interaction with the NGO disarmament community. It identified two possible measures: inviting NGOs and research institutes specialized in certain areas to submit their views in writing on substantive issues to be discussed at the Board's session; and involving members of the Board in the selection of qualified experts from the NGO community to address the Board on the issues on its agenda.

35. To improve its functioning as the Board of Trustees of UNIDIR, the Board agreed that a subcommittee of the Board should be established to examine more closely issues related to the programme of work of the Institute. The subcommittee would meet each year for one full day immediately prior to the summer session of the Board and subsequently report to the Board at that session. With regard to the composition of the subcommittee, it was agreed that the Chairman of the Board, in consultation with the Director of UNIDIR and other members of the Board, should appoint its members.

F. Open-source data for promoting disarmament and non-proliferation

36. The Board received a discussion paper by William C. Potter on the subject. The Board agreed that despite the information revolution and its immense impact on economics, politics, education and warfare, open-source data, which could be an important disarmament tool, remained considerably underutilized. It was pointed out that information received from open sources broadly available through the Internet could supplement classified information that national Governments traditionally relied on in the assessments of strategic threats, verification of compliance and strategic monitoring and the Board stressed the increasing role of independent research institutes and centres in analysing open-source information.

37. Several open-source tools were identified which could provide useful information for disarmament, such as high-resolution commercial satellite imagery, chronologies of proliferation-significant incidents of fissile material trafficking, strategic economic intelligence, missile delivery system and missile defence capabilities and even nuclear exchange scenarios. It was noted that open sources could also provide alternative means to obtain relevant information about the compliance of States with arms control treaty obligations and about advance notice of possible military operations.

38. The Board agreed that increased access to such open-source information as commercial satellite imagery could significantly increase capabilities of independent research institutes in the sphere of disarmament. The Board also agreed that one of the most promising applications of open-source data for the purposes of disarmament involved education. As the 2002 United Nations study on disarmament and non-proliferation education (see A/57/124) noted, advances in information and communication technology and, in particular, the wealth of disarmament and non-proliferation information and resources on the Internet, offered tremendous opportunities for education and training.

39. Recognizing the promising but underutilized potential of open-source data for disarmament, the Board recommended that the following practical steps be taken:

(a) The Department for Disarmament Affairs should develop and maintain a user-friendly, multilingual, online resource site based, among other things, on links to existing resources and other relevant international organizations, Member States, universities, research institutes and NGOs having web sites on disarmament and non-proliferation and with education-oriented online programmes. As a first step, the Department should expand significantly its links to non-United Nations family web sites;

(b) The NGO community should be encouraged to organize technical workshops on interpretation and analysis of open-source data, with special reference to treaty compliance issues. Analysts at many international organizations, as well as those in a large number of national Governments, would also profit from additional training in the utilization of open-source data in such areas as trade in commercial radioactive sources, scouting the scientific literature for applications in chemical and biological weapons research, and dual-use nuclear exports;

(c) In order to expand accessibility to satellite imagery, it may be desirable to establish a fund for the procurement of commercial imagery at a discounted rate. A consortium of NGOs might contribute to the fund and determine the images to be acquired and the means for their dissemination. Such a consortium might also be the logical convener for the previously proposed technical workshop on interpreting satellite imagery;

(d) The United Nations, through its relevant bodies, in particular UNIDIR, should take a lead in familiarizing nations' policy makers with alternative sources of information, by engaging ambassadors and their staff to the Conference on Disarmament in open-source data tutorials or briefing sessions tailored to three or four different disarmament topics. UNIDIR, perhaps in cooperation with one or more NGOs, could organize the open-source briefings. The Department should conduct similar sessions for the New York-based disarmament diplomatic community.

III. Meeting with the Secretary-General

40. The Board met with the Secretary-General on 6 February 2003. Following statements by the Chairman and the Secretary-General, members of the Board raised various subjects of major concern for discussion, including the challenges posed by the current crises vis-à-vis Iraq and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and their serious consequences on international peace and security in general and on multilateral disarmament and non-proliferation regimes in particular, the need to foster new global security concepts, the key role of the United Nations in addressing the threat of the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction to non-State actors, the rapid rise of global military expenditures diverting precious resources from the acute needs of socio-economic development, the potential danger of a weaponized outer space, the devastating consequences of the unabated spread of small arms and light weapons, the need to focus on the human security aspect in pursuing disarmament goals and progress towards completion of the nuclear-weapon-free zone in Central Asia.

IV. Board of Trustees of UNIDIR

41. At its fortieth session, the Board heard an oral report, presented by the Director of UNIDIR, on the implementation of the Institute's programme and budget for the year 2003 since the Board's last meeting. The Director also reported on the consideration of the programme and budget by the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions and the Fifth Committee during the last General Assembly. The Board formally adopted the 2003 programme budget for UNIDIR.

42. The Board expressed its satisfaction that the General Assembly had approved the UNIDIR subvention for the year 2003, which was essential to maintain the Institute's independence.

43. In accordance with the decision made at the fortieth session of the Board, the Chairman appointed an eight-member Subcommittee on UNIDIR. The Subcommittee met on 15 July prior to the forty-first session of the Board to examine issues related to the programme of work of the Institute.

44. At the Subcommittee meeting, after the Director's introduction of the Institute's overall activities and programme of work, members heard detailed presentations by the Institute's staff on its key outputs, such as its quarterly journal, books and reports, as well as its web site. The Subcommittee was then briefed by UNIDIR staff on some ongoing projects, such as the weapons collection evaluation, fellowship programme and Geneva Forum. The Subcommittee also heard a report by the Director and Deputy Director on the Institute's financial situation and on the strategic direction of the Institute.

45. Members of the Subcommittee agreed that having such a direct interaction with staff from the Institute was very important for gaining an in-depth understanding of the projects and research activities undertaken by the Institute, as well as for providing guidance for its future plans. The Board agreed to keep the function of the Subcommittee under review. It also agreed that the membership of the Subcommittee should rotate among the Board members.

46. At its forty-first session, the Board heard the report of the Director of UNIDIR on the activities of the Institute during the period from August 2002 to July 2003 and the planned activities for 2003 and beyond, as well as on its programme of work. It also heard a brief report on the Subcommittee's activities by its Rapporteur.

47. The Board was pleased to note that UNIDIR had continued to undertake a dynamic research programme covering a wide range of topical and emerging issues in the area of disarmament and non-proliferation. The Board called for greater support of its useful work by Member States.

48. The Board identified a number of issues for UNIDIR to consider in planning its future research activities. They included, among other things, disarmament treaty compliance issues, non-strategic nuclear weapons and Iraq as a case study (intelligence-sharing on monitoring weapons of mass destruction and implementation of recommendations of the United Nations study on disarmament and non-proliferation education).

49. The Board, pursuant to article III, paragraph 2 (b), of the statute of the Institute, reviewed and approved, for submission to the General Assembly, the programme of work and budget of the Institute for 2004 (see A/58/259).

V. Disarmament Information Programme

50. The Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs, Jayantha Dhanapala, briefed the Board at its fortieth session on the activities of the United Nations Disarmament Information Programme.

51. The Board heard presentations from representatives of several NGOs during both of its 2003 sessions. For example, at its fortieth session, it heard briefings on

the issue of the costs of missile defence in the United States. The economist and Nobel laureate, Lawrence R. Klein, and the Vice-Chairman of Economists Allied for Arms Reduction (ECAAR), Richard F. Kaufman, addressed the Board on the outcome of the ECAAR study on the "Full Costs of Ballistic Missile Defense" (see paras. 24 and 25 above).

52. At its forty-first session, the Board heard a presentation by David Atwood of the Quaker United Nations Office, Geneva, on "Disarmament and human security: returning to the basics and a new paradigm". It was also briefed by Jozef Goldblat of the Institut universitaire de hautes études internationales, Geneva, and Pugwash on the topic of compliance, verification and enforcement of multilateral disarmament treaties (see para. 4 above).

VI. Future work

53. The Board decided to include the following items on the agenda of its forty-second session, to be held in New York in January/February 2004:

(a) Disarmament and reconciliation in conflict prevention;

(b) Terrorism and weapons of mass destruction and their delivery systems.

VII. Conclusion

54. **The Board underlined the indispensable role of multilateralism in addressing the key challenges facing the world today in the field of disarmament and non-proliferation. It also emphasized the urgency and importance of preserving and consolidating existing multilateral disarmament norms through adherence to treaties and fulfilment of legal obligations. In that regard, the United Nations had a central role to play. The Board underlined the importance of full compliance with treaty obligations by States parties in maintaining and strengthening the norm against weapons of mass destruction.**

55. **The Board agreed that prevention was pivotal and should be pursued with the objective of avoiding any human suffering and insecurity in the first place. It expressed its belief that a pre-emptive, coercive approach, or one based on regime-change itself, did not offer the most effective answer to the threat of proliferation.**

Annex

Members of the Advisory Board on Disarmament Matters

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Mariama Bayard Gamatié
Consultant on development and gender issues
Niamey

Vicente Berasategui
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